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Drug busting seen inept here, corrupt abroad

By Rita McWilliams
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Inadequate coordination among U.S. drug-busting agencies and corruption in the biggest drug-producing nations are responsible for the failure to reduce the flow of illegal drugs into the United States, according to a congressional staff report released yesterday.

"There is very little to be cheerful about in this report," House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Dante Fascell, D-Fla., said in releasing the results of a six-month staff investigation of drug trafficking in Asia and Latin America.

Mr. Fascell said he particularly was disappointed in anti-drug efforts by Mexico, where a U.S. Drug Enforcement

Administration agent was kidnapped Feb. 7.

"Here is a program which we have been told for years is a model anti-narcotics effort. Yet the report indicates the program is in a shambles," Mr. Fascell said. "We not only don't know how much is being produced; we don't even know how much is being eradicated despite the fact that we're paying for it."

According to the report, drug traffickers have exploited government corruption and inefficiency in Mexico — a major producer of marijuana and heroin and a country through which other nations move cocaine to the United States. Major drug traffickers often have advance notice of impending raids.

"The program is at best nibbling at the

margins of the problem," the report said.

Traffickers have better and more sophisticated resources than the drug enforcement officers, allowing the smugglers to change their strategies and routes quickly. The report urges:

- Establishing a cadre of professional narcotics officers at the State Department.

- Spraying domestically with the herbicides the United States urges other countries to use.

- Establishing a system to track all drug offenses by foreigners in the United States and informing U.S. embassies in drug-producing nations.

- A bigger role for the Central Intelligence Agency in gathering information about illegal drug trafficking.